

Mt. Carmel Center Beacon For Veterans



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"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they have the HEART"

Elizabeth Andrews



The volunteers at Mt. Carmel have SO MUCH heart! We celebrated our first Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon April, 28th 2017, in recognition of the selfless participation and dedication of our many volunteers. Each volunteer was recognized for their specific contribution that has affected our veteran community immensely through their warmth, compassion, and generosity of time.

Mt. Carmel is honored to have over 100 individuals donating their time in volunteerism, 25 of whom volunteer on a consistent basis. This level of active participation has provided over 5,100 hours of selfless service to our Veterans, Service Members and their Families.

One of the volunteers, Michael Chumbler, summed up his experiences at Mt. Carmel "There is far more need than existing services can cover in Colorado Springs and Mt Carmel fills those essential needs; too many veterans are hurting and Mt Carmel gives them hope." Michael Chumbler .

A special thank you was given to our **Volunteer of the Year, Chris Brown** who has devoted over 600 hours in service at Mt. Carmel Center of Excellence.

Thank you to all our dedicated Volunteers!

Staff

Col (R) Robert McLaughlin

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Col (R) Joel Hamilton

Director of Operations

Cheryl Christie

Director of Veteran &
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Nick Palarino

Director of Partner Development.

Daniel Martinez

Director of Employment
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Cindy McLaughlin

Director of Communications

Angie Pickett

Operations Manager

Keisha Lancaster

Facilities, Resource & Event
Coordinator

Kirsten Blaire

Mental Health Program Manager

Leslie Abrams

Administrative Assistant

Randy Gradishar

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Peer Navigators

Tony Hoobler

Nicole Holling

Adam Baker

Generalist Navigator

Amber Hargrave

HB 16-1276 Internship Program

Paul Price

Workshop Facilitator

Chip Underwood

Job Coach

Christina Martinez

Intern Facilitator

Receptionist

Juanita Reedy

Hilary Bryant

Newsletter Publisher

Marilyn Twaites

The Voice of Our Clients

*"I appreciate the work from Mt. Carmel, your message to veterans to help with transition from military to the civilian sector has been a great help to me and my family. I appreciate all the tools and resources that have been given to succeed in the future. It is a true testimonial for me to have the smooth transition, and to show that life after the military can be a hard pill to swallow, but the fact is taking the steps taught in class and the lessons learned from the networking events and mock interviews are priceless. Thank you again for all you do." - **Brian***

*"Helped with problem. Excellent service." - **Anonymous***

*"Amber is awesome, Mt. Carmel was great. Nice to know you're here." - **Margaret***

Employment and Transition Programs

The Veteran Integration Program finished their fiscal year strong, helping 213 Veterans find meaningful employment, and is looking to assist even more in the upcoming year. We hosted another mock interview event which consisted of a panel of all new employers. As a result, out of the 10 participants in the "mock" interview event, 2 received follow on interviews and another actually received an offer for employment.

The Colorado Veterans' Service-to-Career Pilot program is continuing to grow. Since the implementation of the program, just a few months ago, over 70 personnel have attended PrepConnect 360, which is a free, monthly, 5-day career transition workshop. We have also been able to place interns with organizations such as **Red Leg Brewing Company, Relius Medical, and Catalyst Campus**, just to name a few.

As we continue to explore additional ways to help Veterans and their Families with employment please keep in mind our upcoming events. The 9th of June will be our next mock interview event here at Mt. Carmel. We are always looking to incorporate new partners that are interested in collaborating to assist in these efforts.

Boutique Opening Soon

Mt. Carmel Center of Excellence, in continued partnership with Discover Goodwill in Colorado Springs is proud to begin our newest venture together with the opening of "The Discover Goodwill Boutique at Mt. Carmel"! In the early part of June, approximately three days each week with limited hours, Veterans will be able to "shop" for clothing. Mt. Carmel and Discover Goodwill have enjoyed an exceptional partnership since Mt. Carmel's inception, where Discover Goodwill continues to offer employment and training opportunities to our Veteran population in specific areas such as the Diesel Mechanic industry. Recently, leadership of both organizations recognized an emerging need evolving out of our Veteran's Career and Employment Center, as well as within our Veterans Resource Connection Program, where Military, Veterans, and their Family members may be lacking business casual and professional business attire.

Whether in support of career networking and interview events or actual on the job attire for their new profession, appropriate clothing is a requirement. Through initial clothing donations made by several community partners, we have built a very solid and functional inventory of men's and women's clothing to address this very need within the community. Mt. Carmel volunteers will staff the boutique, while Discover Goodwill manages the retail inventory, including refreshing inventory selection every couple of weeks through their various retail outlets across the Front Range.

Clothing will be made available to patrons through a requested donation-only basis, so as not to be a financial barrier to their specific individual or family need. For more information concerning how to get involved or to learn more about how to take advantage of this great program, please call our Mt. Carmel Center of Excellence Front Desk at (719) 309-4714.



Ski Breck Military Couples' Retreat

Last month, our staff was honored to host the Ski Breck Military Couples' Retreat and have the opportunity to give back to Veterans and their Spouses, who have sacrificed so much. Our goal is always to provide a stress-free environment where the couples can learn to ski or snowboard together, reconnect as a couple, and work toward improving relationships that were impacted by military service.

During the retreat, we stayed in a beautiful mountain lodge where all expenses were covered from meals, transportation, lodging, equipment rental, ski passes and world-class ski instruction. The event also included pre and post meetings that provided instruction by a Life Coach and an introduction to the Veteran services provided by Mt. Carmel and our partnering organizations.

The staff and guests had a fun-filled weekend and our guests expressed a multitude of verbal and written compliments and gratitude about their experience; below are a few quotes:

"Forced us to spend time together without children which was fun and resulted in getting truths and frustrations out. This was the most incredible experience since my honeymoon."

"Time together we needed!"

We are planning our next adventure in October where new couples will learn to fly-fish during our next Military Couples' Retreat.



Mt. Carmel's Employees



Keisha Lancaster – Facility, Resource & Event Coordinator

Raised in sunny California, Keisha was the fifth in a household of seven children. Keisha joined the Army right out of high school and worked as a Transportation Management Coordinator on Fort Carson. The variety of outdoor activities and the weather convinced Keisha to remain in Colorado, her home now for over 18 years. Keisha has a Bachelor's Degree in Business Management and Accounting from DeVry University. Aside from education and family being among her biggest accomplishments, Keisha strives to make Veterans and Soldiers feel like family everywhere she goes.

Nick Palarino – Director of Partner Development

Nick, a U.S. Army retiree, was raised an Army brat and his family settled in Bowie, Maryland. After graduating from The Citadel, he served 22 years as an artilleryman. His last eight years were assigned at Fort Carson serving in different positions that included Rear Detachment for three separate brigades, division level staff and two separate deployments. He holds a Master's Degree in Management from Webster University. Nick married the girl next door while stationed at Fort Sill and they have a daughter who graduated from University of Colorado Boulder and a son in the Marines. During the summer months, you will find Nick hiking the Colorado Trail and the Continental Divide Trail.



Golf Tournament at Sanctuary



Mt. Carmel Center of Excellence will hold its 2nd Benefit Golf Tournament at the exclusive **Sanctuary Golf Course** in Sedalia, Colorado, on August 16, 2017. Sanctuary has consistently been recognized as "one of the 150 best courses in the United States," *Golf Digest*. Sanctuary hosts approximately 25 charitable golf tournaments each year and Mt. Carmel was chosen as one of the non-profits. Located 40 miles from Colorado Springs, the course is flanked by 40,000 acres of protected open space. "Sanctuary is simply the most coveted round of golf in Colorado. It might be the most exclusive private golf course in the world." *RockiesGolf.com David R. Holland, Senior Writer 2012. An opportunity to play the Sanctuary is not to be missed!*

In addition to the 18 holes of golf, the event will include lunch and dinner, a silent auction, mulligans, and on course

Corporate sponsorship opportunities range from \$5,000 to \$20,000. For more information or to reserve your sponsorship contact Nick Palarino 719-309-4711 or npalarino@mtcarmelcenter.org

